

BLONDIE



SALLY FORTH



THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN



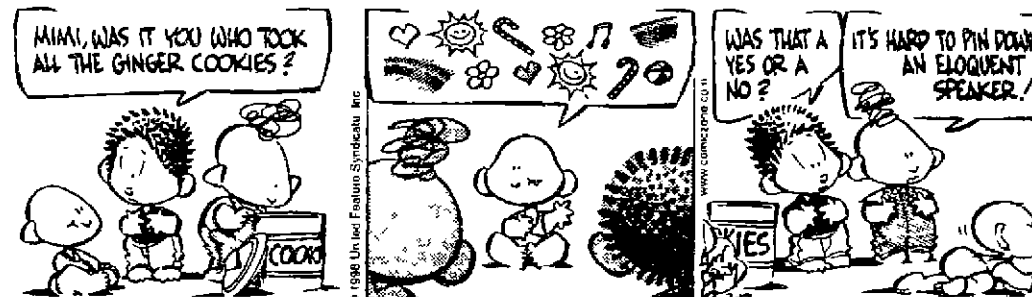
9 CHICKWEED LANE



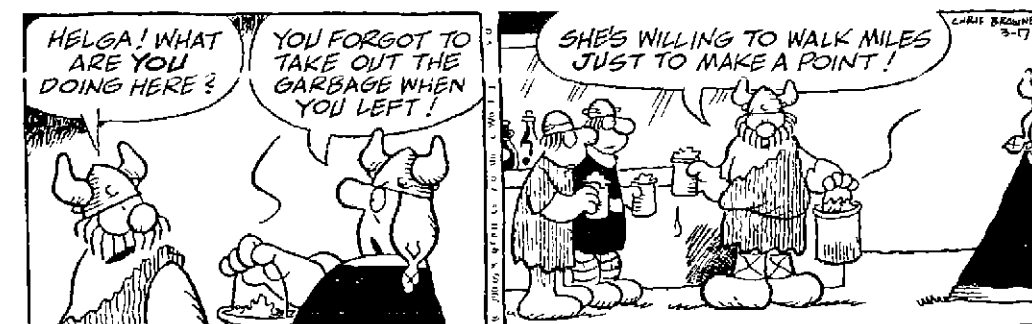
ANDY CAPP



ROSE IS ROSE



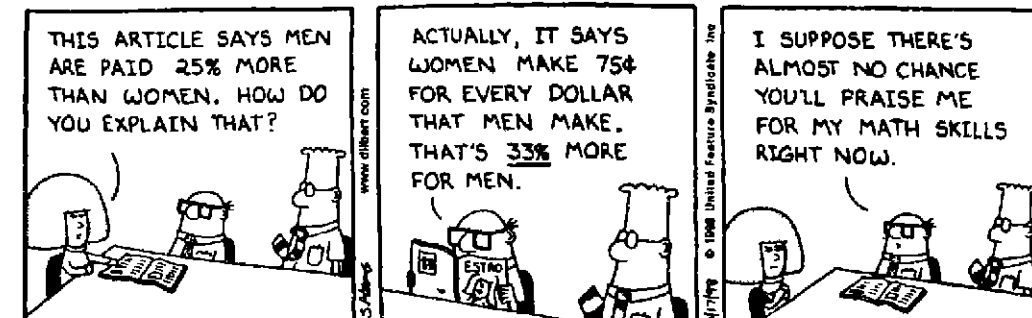
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



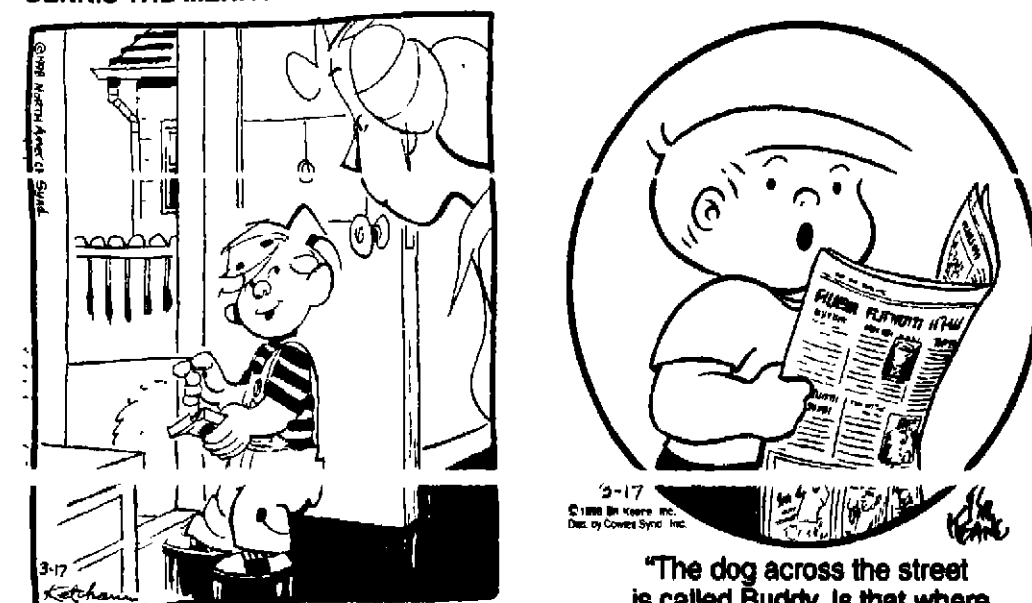
MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM



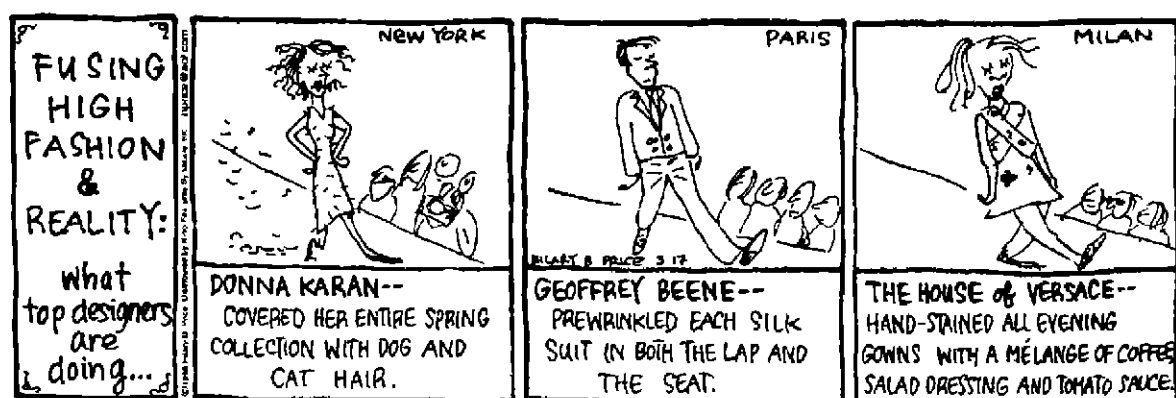
DILBERT



DENNIS THE MENACE



RHYMES WITH ORANGE



RALPH



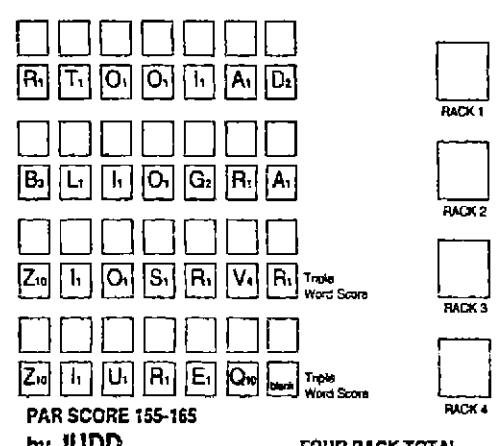
Today's Birthdays

Actress Mercedes McCambridge is 80. The former chairwoman of the NAACP, Myrtle Evers-Williams, is 65. Singer-songwriter John Sebastian is 54. Actor Patrick Duffy is 49. Actor Kurt Russell is 47. Country singer Susie Allison is 46. Actress Lesley-Anne Down is 44. Actor Gary Sinise is 43. Actor Rob Lowe is 34. Rock singer Billy Corgan (Smashing Pumpkins) is 31. Rock musician Van Connor (Screaming Trees) is 31.

I NEED HELP



SCRABBLE



For solution, see Classified.

WORD SLEUTH



For solution, see Classified.

HOROSCOPE

For Wednesday, March 18, 1998

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) That project you've been dreading must be dealt with. You can't avoid it any longer.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) It isn't a good time to discuss anything of a sensitive nature. Feelings are still too raw.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) You're struck with what you consider a brilliant idea. While it's inventive, you should recognize its flaws.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Your technological skills come to the fore, particularly where computers are concerned.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) You're put off when someone begs you for a favor. It seems the person is always in need.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) A child is a source of delight for parents. Single folks are in an adventurous romantic mood.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) A short day trip involves a cultural pursuit that's caught your interest.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) You've soothed your jagged nerves and are ready to tackle a new project. Bigwigs are happy to oblige with a new assignment.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) You're right to think that a certain baro is directed at you. But the person delivering it has it in for just about everyone!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) A situation at work is to your liking. However, be sure you don't betray any confidences.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Sometimes people don't understand your sense of humor. If you offend someone as a result, be sure to explain yourself.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Bigwigs single you out for praise on a job well done. While you bask, a certain co-worker is experiencing the pangs of jealousy.

ACES ON BRIDGE

By Bobby Wolff

"How did you make the slam?" inquired a player who had gone down. "D-o East get nervous and hop up with his king on a low diamond lead from dummy?"

"It wouldn't have worked against my East," was the reply. "I also lost the diamond finesse. But I chose the best time to lose it." The losing declarer won his club ace, cashed dummy's queen and jack of trumps, and ruffed dummy's low club. When no king dropped, he cashed his three top hearts, taking a worthless diamond oscar from dummy. A diamond finesse lost to East's king, and a diamond return ended South's chances. Eventually, he had to concede a second diamond, and the slam went one down. How did the winning declarer succeed in spite of losing the diamond finesse? He saw an extra chance if East held K-x or a singleton diamond king. After winning his club ace, South also cashed dummy's queen and jack of trumps and ruffed a club. Then he cashed dummy's diamond ace and three hearts, discarding dummy's club queen. Now it was time to take the diamond finesse. He led low to dummy's queen, losing to East's king, but his careful timing earned a just reward. East had no diamond to lead, and the forced sluff and ruff conceded the slam-going trick. Note that South's careful play would cost nothing if West held the diamond king. Dummy's diamond queen would win a delayed trick, giving South the same 12 tricks.

Vulnerable Both
Dealer: North

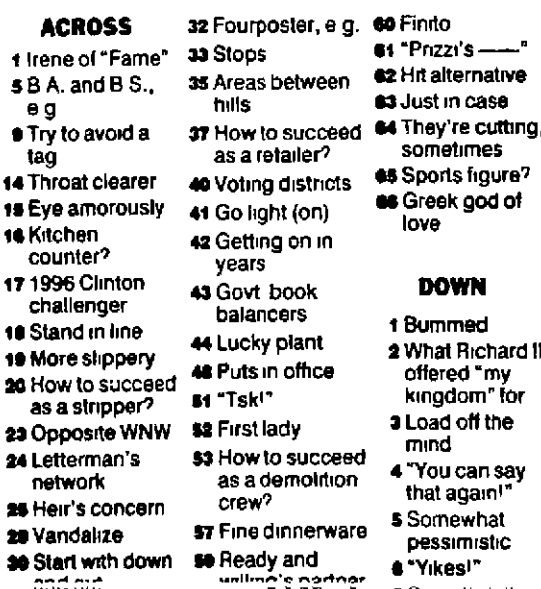
The bidding

North	East	South	West
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
3♦	Pass	4♠	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
4♠	Pass	6♠	All pass

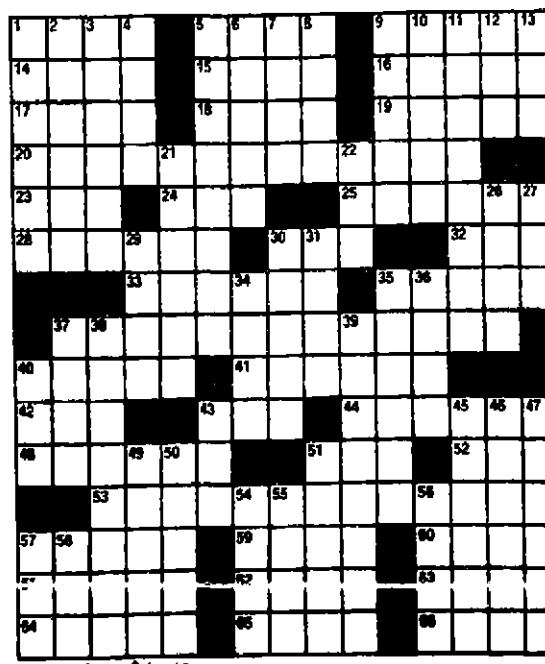
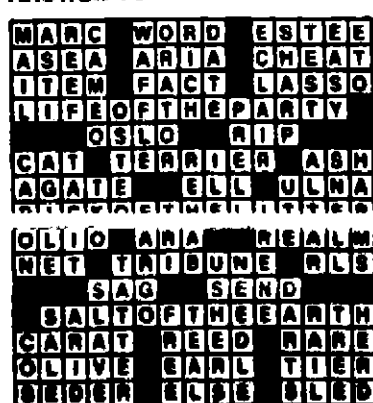
Opening lead: Club seven

N.Y. TIMES CROSSWORD

No. 0203



ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE



Answers to any three clues in this puzzle are available by touch-tone phone 1-800-420-5656 (75¢ per minute). Annual subscriptions are available for the best of Sunday crosswords from the last 50 years: 1-800-7-ACROSS.